1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

721 country was engaged in fighting her, and of more recent dealings of the same kind. It shows also how the customs of a people react inevitably upon themselves for good or for evil.

642 In the case of the confederacies above mentioned the very abolition
721 of war between certain units increased the power of the aggregate body and at the same time their temptation to use this advantage in the exploitation of their less well-organized neighbors. And in the Creek confederacy, for instance, while its very existence depended on the fact that certain tribes had agreed to live without fighting, social advancement and the whole structure of the state was dependent on war to such a degree that a complete account of the institution involves an almost complete account of the Creek social system. This having already been given, we are now in a position to take up more particularly the method of waging war.

[302]

FIG. 103.—Head of a Creek warrior. (After Romans)

726 The Creek warrior fought almost naked. He wore, of course, the breechclout and belt, also a pair of moccasins. His face and the upper part of his body were painted red and black. He carried a pack in which were an old blanket, some parched ground corn, cords, and leather with which to repair his moccasins. His weapons consisted

[441] in earlier times of a bow and arrows, a knife and a tomahawk hanging at the side, and a war club stuck through his belt. Adair mentions a javelin which would be a short spear or throwing knife.[95] In later times the bow and arrow gave place to the gun, though the former were used along with the latter as late as Adair's time. The war club (átasa) was, however, the principal symbol of the institution. Stiggins describes it as "shaped like a small gun about 2 feet long, and at the curve near where the lock would be is a thin square piece of iron or steel with a sharp edge drove in to leave a projection of about 2 inches."[96] It is remembered at the present day as an implement like a combined hatchet and knife, which could either be retained in the hand or thrown. One form of headdress of a Creek warrior is shown in the accompanying illustration, taken from the work of Romans (fig. 103).

721 Intertribal warfare among the southern Indians was suppressed so long ago that not much is remembered regarding it. In this

[95] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 393. [96] Stiggins, Ms. Hist. Narr., p. 35.

1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

From Adair's account it will be seen that killing and scalping had a religious as well as a social basis, the former being the necessity the people felt themselves under—in this respect like the ancient Greeks—of placating the souls of the dead. There is every reason to think that ancient Creek belief was practically the same, but this side of the institution appears to have died first, the social advancement to be won through scalps being a more persistent motive.

In the most ancient times stockades, in which natural features were taken advantage of and which sometimes had moats, played a great part in warfare, especially in regions often harried by war parties. It is significant that the chroniclers of De Soto's expedition do not mention such structures until they reached the tribes near Tennessee River—i. e., the frontiers of the Muskhogean peoples toward the north.[54] In this quarter they were probably subject to incursions of Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee and other Algonkian peoples. Stockades were again found along Alabama River, and from thence to the Mississippi—i. e., on the western Creek boundary. Ulibahali and a deserted town near it were stockaded, also Mabila, Chickasaw, and Alibamo.[55] The following description of a stockade is given by Ranjel:

"Three days march southeast of Tuasi (Tawasa) and two days before they came to Talisi (Tulsa) the Spaniards "came to an old village that had two fences and good towers, and these walls are after this fashion: They drive many thick stakes tall and straight close to one another. These are then interlaced with long withes, and then overlaid with clay within and without. They make loopholes at intervals and they make their towers and turrets separated by the curtain and parts of the wall as seems best. And at a distance it looks like a fine wall or rampart and such stockades are very strong."[56]

Similar to this is Elvas's account of the stockade of Ulibahali. "The fence," he says, "which was like that to other towns seen afterwards, was of large timber sunk deep and firmly into the earth, having many long poles of the size of the arm, placed crosswise to nearly the height of a lance, with embrasures, and coated with mud inside and out, having loopholes for archery."[57]

Methods of constructing fences of this character were well known throughout the Southeast, and Le Moyne gives what purports to be a picture of one seen in Florida, though it appears to be utterly unreliable.[58]

When De Soto and his companions entered the temple, or rather ossuary, of Talimeco they found there "breastplates like corselets

[54] Bourne, Narr. of De Soto, vol. II, pp. 15, 108.
[55] Ibid., vol. I, pp. 85, 90, 104, 108; vol. II, pp. 18, 34, 113, 122, 125, 128.
[56] Ibid., vol. II, p. 115.
[57] Ibid., vol. I, p. 85.
[58] This description is given in Bulletin 73, Bur. Amer. Ethn., pp. 379-380. Cf. also Bulletin 43, Bur. Amer. Ethn., pp. 133-134.

1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

and headpieces made of rawhide, the hair stripped off; and also very good shields." [59] Farther on the Indians who came across the Mississippi to oppose the Spaniards "had shields made of canes joined, so strong and so closely interwoven with such thread that a crossbow could hardly pierce them." [60] The existence of armor and shields among the southern Indians is therefore proved, although they were given up soon after white contact because the introduction of guns rendered them useless.

In their fights with the Spaniards the Indians usually went naked, and they had carried the science of warfare with the bow and arrow to a high level, as the Spaniards freely testify. Elvas says: "The Indians are exceedingly ready with their weapons, and so warlike and nimble, that they have no fear of footmen; for if these charge them they flee, and when they turn their backs they are presently upon them. They avoid nothing more easily than the flight of an arrow. They never remain quiet, but are continually running, traversing from place to place, so that neither crossbow nor arquebuse can be aimed at them. Before a Christian can make a single shot with either, an Indian will discharge three or four arrows; and he seldom misses of his object. Where the arrow meets with no armour, it pierces as deeply as the shaft from a crossbow." [61] He adds that the arrows with heads generally broke on a target, but those made of sharpened cane would go through, and they would split against armor but penetrate it.[62] Cabeza de Vaca, in speaking of an encounter between the people of Narvaez and the Apalachee, says: "There were men that day who swore they had seen two oak trees, each as thick as the calf of a leg, shot through and through by arrows, which is not surprising if we consider the force and dexterity with which they shoot. I myself saw an arrow that had penetrated the base of a poplar tree for half a foot in length." [63] Says Ranjel, in describing the battle of Mabila: "The arrow shots were tremendous, and sent with such a will and force that the lance of one gentleman named Nuño de Tovar, made of two pieces of ash and very good, was pierced by an arrow in the middle, as by an augur, without being split, and the arrow made a cross with the lance." [64] By means of arrows on which flaming tree moss had been tied houses and other constructions were set on fire by the Florida Indians as described and illustrated by Le Moyne. The Chickasaw used another device to fire their town when it was occupied by the Spaniards, the same resorted to by Gideon. They brought fire past the sentinels in little pots, two to four getting by at a time.[64]

---

[59] Bourne, Narr. of De Soto, vol. II, p. 101.
[60] Ibid., p. 138.
[61] Ibid., vol. I, pp. 25-26.
[62] Jour. of Alvar. Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Bandelier Narr., p. 31.
[63] Bourne, op. cit., vol. II, p. 127.
[64] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

sippi tribes by those on the eastern side. When Bartram was on the Suwanee River, Fla., he learned that the Indians of that region went trading and hunting in their cypress canoes all along the coast as far as the southern end of Florida and even to Havana. He himself encountered a party which had just returned from the latter place. He states that they carried thither in trade "deer skins, furs, dry fish, bees-wax, honey, bear's oil, and some other articles."[1] Elsewhere he notes that the same articles, minus the dry fish, were traded to the American settlers and several Indians had become very well to do in consequence of this industry.[2] The following from Swan shows how and where they obtained their firearms at the end of the eighteenth century.

"The Creek Indians are very badly armed. The chief has made it a point to furnish them with muskets in preference to rifles, which, from the necessity of being wiped out after every shot, have been found less convenient than the former. Their muskets are of the slender, French manufacture, procured through the Spanish government at Pensacola, but are so slightly made, that they soon become unfit for any service.

"If the Indians were able to purchase for themselves, they would, however, prefer rifles in all cases, because they find them more sure and lasting: a good one will, at any time, command the price of 100 chalks, or $50, to be paid in skins or horses in the country."[3]

That some of the Indians of this tribe readily took to trading is reiterated by Romans, who says: "There are few towns in this nation where there is not some savage residing, who either trades of his own flock, or is employed as a factor."[4]

Counting

The Muskhogean systems of numeration are all decimal. In Adair's time the Chickasaw figured out mercantile transactions on the ground, a system which they called yakâ-ne Tlápha,[5] or "scoring on the ground."[6] They made single marks for each unit and a cross for 10. Adair believed that this latter mark was borrowed from the whites, but I have seen computations by the northwest coast peoples in which straight marks are used for units and a cross inserted to mark off every 20 units, the system of notation being vigesimal with them. The cross in the south may have been used for the same purpose in marking off tens. It is to be added that Adair's statements are confirmed by Eakins.[7] Eakins also says that they used

[1] Bartram, Travels, p. 225.
[2] Bartram, Trans. Am. Eth. Soc., vol. III, p. 39.
[3] Swan in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. V, p. 261.
[4] Romans, Nat. Hist. E. and W. Fla., pp. 92-94.
[5] Yakni lapa, "ground spread out."
[6] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 77.
[7] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. I, p. 273.